

Amendments to the Specification:

On page 5, lines 23-24, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

Figure 7 sets forth a number of programs in memory ~~during~~ for implementing various hidden bonus features of the present invention.

On page 6, lines 3-25, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

1. Overview. In Figure 1 is shown an embodiment of a gaming machine 10 such as a standard slot machine modified to incorporate the present invention. The hidden bonus feature of the present invention can be used in many different types of casino games. The slot machine 10, itself, is conventional and may comprise a number of different designs. The block diagram hardware components of such a slot machine 10 as shown in Figure 1 are illustrative only and include a microprocessor, computer or controller 20 interconnected 26 to a device 30 for receiving bets or wagers from players. The device 30 can be of any suitable design or construction and can be, for example, but not limited to, a bill reader, coin acceptor, credit device, credit card reader, ticket reader, smart card reader, debit card reader, or any combination thereof. How a wager is received in device 30 is immaterial to the teachings of the present invention. The microprocessor 20 is also connected to an award feature 40 which can be, for example, but not limited to, a display showing current available player credits and the associated separate devices for delivering payouts to the player such as: a coin or ticket dispenser, a device for delivering payout information to a smart card; etc. The payout or award may be made to the player in a variety of ways. Furthermore, the award can be any type of an award, such as but not limited to: a monetary value, a free game play, a comp, a physical item such as a car, etc.

On page 6 beginning at line 26 and carrying over to line 3 on page 7, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

The microprocessor 20 is usually connected 28 to a random number generator (RNG) 50 which may be a separate hardware component or a software module within memory 60. The microprocessor 20 is interconnected 24 to memory 60 and interconnected 72 to display

70 showing slot reels 94a, 94b & 94c. Slot machine 10 is shown in functional block diagrams and conventional devices, ports, busses, buffers, etc. are not shown.

On page 7, lines 4-14, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In Figure 1, symbols 92 are shown which are also conventional in play of conventional slot machines. Three reels 94a, 94b, and 94c are illustrated in display 70 showing symbols 92a, 92b, and 92c. Any number of reels 94 could be utilized and any number of symbols 92 can also be utilized. While one pay line 90 is shown, it is to be expressly understood that conventional slot machines have a plurality of pay lines and such pay lines do not need to be linear but could zigzag over the face of the reels 94. The hidden bonus feature of the present invention is independent of the type of casino gaming machine 10 and can be implemented in any suitable casino game such as: video poker, keno, etc.

On page 7, lines 22-31, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

It is to be expressly understood that in some designs for the hardware of the present invention, microprocessor ~~20~~ 120 can drive over 22 the display 110 without using a separate display processor 20 and display memory 130. For example, in a video poker gaming machine 10, the display 70 could display play of the underlying ~~casino game~~ gaming machine 100a with the occurrence of a hidden bonus in the same display 70 under control of the microprocessor 20. The method of the present invention as set forth in the following works with a casino game using a single display such as only display 70 in Figure 1 for play of the underlying gaming machine with the hidden bonus feature 200.

On page 8, lines 8-18, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In Figure 2, the conventional underlying gaming machine 100a such as a slot machine ~~100a~~ has a separate bonus game 100b conventionally triggered by a bonus condition such as the bonus symbol 80 on pay line 90. The provision of a bonus symbol 80 on the pay line 90 is also conventional and it is well known that ~~slot~~ underlying gaming machines ~~10~~ 100a

such as slot machines can have a bonus condition(s) randomly occur which results in a player having the opportunity to play the bonus game 100b. In Figure 2, the microprocessor 20 over line 22 delivers the bonus condition to the casino bonus game 100b. When the bonus condition 80 occurs, which may be any suitable bonus condition, the player's attention is directed to the display 110 of the casino bonus game ~~400~~ 100b.

On page 9, lines 11-23, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

The term "casino game" is defined herein to include any gaming machine 10, underlying gaming machine 100a having a bonus game 100b implemented with a computer-based control 20 such as illustrated with a microprocessor in Figures 1 and 2, or any type of bonus game 100b. The hidden bonus feature 200 can be implemented in a gaming machine 10, in a bonus game, in both the underlying gaming machine and the bonus game, in only the underlying gaming machine (and not the bonus game), in only the bonus game (and not the underlying gaming machine), etc. As will be pointed out later, the casino game can be part of a wide area progressive or played over the Internet or other online environment. Such casino games are regulated in various jurisdictions by suitable regulations ~~insuring~~ ensuring fairness to both players and casinos.

On page 10, lines 1-19, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

The hidden bonus feature 200 shown in Figure 3 starts 300, in one embodiment, at the same point in time or at different times in the casino game, but whether it occurs can also be determined at a random statistical frequency based on the input from the random number generator 50. The occurrence of the hidden bonus feature can be, in another embodiment, based on an event 302. For example, such an event ~~200~~ 302 may occur when the player wins 100 credits or more in the underlying casino game. Or, the event ~~200~~ 302 may occur when a game symbol 92 or combination of symbols 92 ~~appears~~ appear in play of the casino game. The occurrence of the hidden bonus feature 200 is vigorous and is not limited to the above ~~embodiments~~ embodiments. Any event 302 that invokes the occurrence of the hidden bonus feature 200 can be used. As additional examples, but not meant to limit the invention,

the event 302 can be triggered on a given or randomly selected number of coin-ins to the underlying game; on a given or randomly selected number of bonus game 140 plays; on a given or randomly selected number of credits won in the underlying game (whether or not it is the same player); on the occurrence of a given timed period, given time of the day, or randomly selected time period or time of day; etc.

On page 10 beginning at line 20 and carrying over to line 22 on page 11, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In one embodiment, nothing is displayed at all to the player when the hidden bonus feature 200 occurs. In this embodiment, the hidden bonus feature 200 may be a function of the outcome of the casino game (i.e., game outcome). In an example of a slot casino game, the hidden bonus feature 200 occurs with a predetermined combination ~~(or,~~ (or alignment) of a game symbol 92 or game symbols 92 as an event 302, such as, by way of an example, four watermelons (not shown). In which case, the award for the hidden bonus feature 200 is obtained by the player touching the fourth watermelon to receive 2X the standard payout. The response 310 from the player is the touching 370 of the fourth watermelon on the touch screen display 70. If the player touches 370 any other watermelon or symbol 92 nothing happens as these are incorrect responses. Likewise, if the player wagers and spins the reels 94 again, this is an incorrect response 310 for the hidden bonus feature 200. What the hidden bonus feature 200 is and/or how to respond is not known to the player. In the above watermelon example, the player does not know from any instructions for play of the casino game that the hidden bonus feature 200 is “four watermelons” or that the player must touch 370 the “fourth watermelon” to receive the 2X (or whatever the desired bonus is). In one variation, the player responding 310 in an incorrect manner (e.g., by touching the second watermelon) negates the feature. In another variation, an incorrect response 310 on the part of the player does not negate the feature, which remains eligible to be “discovered” and is only negated when the reels 94 are again spun to initiate the next play on the machine (e.g., causing any pre-determined time period timer to immediately time out) or when a pre-determined time period times out. This is shown by dotted lines 372 in Figure 3. The time it takes for a player to input 370 after the hidden bonus feature 200 occurs, in a variation, results in a higher payoff to the player in step 330. In this variation, the method would start a

timer and measure the amount of time ~~before~~ for the correct response 310 to be input 370. The method, either in a look-up table or a software determination, would then provide a higher award 330 for a faster input 370 resulting in a correct response 310.

On page 11 beginning at line 23 and carrying over to line 6 on page 12, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In another variation, when the four watermelons line up, the hidden bonus feature 200 may be to touch the fifth symbol on that line or to touch any non-melon, etc. The hidden bonus feature 200 then becomes touching this other symbol which may turn into a melon, etc. Or, it may be to touch any non-melon symbol whose position becomes wild, etc. It is to be understood that many variations and other embodiments can be utilized and the examples presented herein do not limit the scope of the present invention. The watermelon example is but one of many. Additional examples of events 302 based on game outcomes are: a card combination in a casino card game (e.g., three aces), a number combination in a video keno casino game (e.g. appearance of "7, 17, 27"), etc. Again, the player input 370 is also vigorous. In the case of three aces, touching any ace, the first ace, the last ace, or simply the ~~screen~~, screen 70 can be selected as correct responses 310 under the teachings of the present invention.

On page 12, lines 7-22, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In another variation, the hidden bonus feature 200 can occur when an event 302 is combination of game symbols 92 that happens during play of a casino game such as, for example, when a card combination is initially dealt to a player such as in a video poker game. Here, for example, the hidden bonus feature 200 occurs when the combination initially dealt to the player has two red queens (i.e., the event 302). The correct response 310 from the player is to touch 370 either red queen. The predetermined game symbols as events 302 in a casino game can be one, two, or any suitable number. For example, in a Wild Deuces video poker casino game, the hidden bonus feature 200 can be a single jack which can appear as the event 302 in the initial hand or any subsequent cards dealt. The player's correct response 310 would be to slap the jack, by touching 370 the card, to receive an

award 330. The event 302 based on a symbol or combination of game symbols can ~~occur~~, occur "during play," that is, at any time from the start to the end of the casino game.

On page 12 beginning at line 23 and carrying over to line 21 on page 13, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

The casino game may be interrupted, in another embodiment, in order to activate the hidden bonus feature 200. The play of the casino game is implemented in software run by the microprocessor 20, and this software program permits the execution of the hidden bonus feature 200 software. This execution can occur, at the outset, such as just after the player places a wager 30 in the casino game, it can occur any time during the play of the casino game (e.g., underlying game or bonus game), or it can occur near the end of play of the casino game. Or, it can occur at a set time during play of the casino game such as, in the case of a slot game 100 of Figure 1, in response to the player providing an input 370 to cause the slot ~~reel~~ reels 94 to start turning, while the reels 94 are spinning, or after the reels 94 stop. In the case of the casino bonus game 100b of Figure 2, the hidden bonus feature 200 can also be activated at the start, during, or at the end of the casino bonus game 100b. The occurrence of the hidden bonus feature 200 does not interfere with the normal play of the casino game. In other words, after display of the hidden bonus feature 200, play resumes 340 by returning to the underlying computer software for continued play of the casino game. In one embodiment, the ~~interrupt~~ interruption of the play of the casino game to activate the hidden bonus feature 200 and returning to resume play of the casino game occurs in a fashion so as not to interfere with the outcome of the casino game. When one or a combination of gaming symbols 92 appears 302 to activate the hidden bonus feature 200, if the player does not respond with an input 370 when the hidden bonus feature ~~occurs~~ occurs, play continues ~~340~~ 340 conventionally. The player's input 370 and correct response 310, however, ~~causes~~ cause the bonus award 330 to be delivered. Stated another way, the occurrence of the hidden bonus feature 200 and any award 330 provided is independent of the play of the casino game.

On page 13 beginning at line 22 and carrying over to line 2 on page 14, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In reference to Figure 3, the occurrence of the hidden bonus feature 200 may not occur and path 202 is entered for casino game play to continue, or the response 310 is incorrect and path 312 is entered for the casino game to continue. In one variation, the player input 370 for a correct response in step 310 must be received in a predetermined period of time such as in two seconds and, if not received, path 312 is entered. In another variation, the player may be able to keep re-trying 372 to input 370 the correct response 310 within a predetermined time period such as in three or four seconds. Once the hidden bonus feature 200 of the present invention is over, the casino game resumes (continues) 340 play as if it never happened.

On page 14, lines 3-21, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

The occurrence of the hidden bonus feature 200 in display 70 or 110 occurs as follows when based on randomness 300. The microprocessor 20 upon receiving the random number input 28 from the random number generator 50 activates the hidden bonus feature 200. During all play over time of the casino game, the occurrence of the hidden bonus feature 200 is random. Any of a number of different types of random number generator programs and hardware devices 50 could be used under the teachings of the present invention. As before, when the hidden bonus feature 200 occurs, the player is given an opportunity to respond 310 through a player input device 370. The player input device 370 can be any number of conventionally available input devices. For example, player input 370 could be incorporated in the touch screen display 110 at a suitable location such as touching the display of the hidden bonus feature 200. Or, it could be located on the gaming machine 10 or the underlying gaming machine 100a as a separate input device 370 shown in dotted lines in Figures 1 and 2. Again, player input devices 370 are well known in the gaming industry and any suitable player input device 370 could be utilized under the teachings of the present invention.

On page 14, lines 22-27, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

When the player response 310 is not correct, the hidden bonus feature 200 is over and, in one embodiment, the casino game resumes 340. In another embodiment, the casino game continues while the hidden bonus feature 200 is still displayed. If the player response 310 is correct, then the player is awarded 330 such as by increasing the award 40.

On page 14 beginning at line 28 and carrying over to line 4 on page 15, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In the play of the method shown in Figure 3, no instructions or help information is provided to the player either on the face of the gaming machine 10 or in any instructions as to what the hidden bonus feature 200 is and/or how to respond. The hidden bonus feature 200 occurs on the screen 70, 110. The player must provide a correct response 310. In one embodiment, no clues, no hints, no information whatsoever is given to the player while the hidden bonus feature 200 occurs.

On page 15, lines 5-17, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In another embodiment, the “existence” of the hidden bonus feature 200 is generally made known on the face of the casino game such as: “This Game has a Hidden Bonus That Pays \$20,” “This Game Has Mystery Bonus—Can you Figure It Out?” In the case of the slap jack hidden bonus feature 200 example above, the “existence” may be made known: “Slap Jack Hidden Bonus,” but with no instructions on what, exactly, initiates the hidden bonus feature and what to do or how to respond. In the case of the four watermelons (and, for example, touching the fourth watermelon), the existence may be known such as “Watermelon Hidden Feature” but with no information given anywhere on the gaming machine 10 for the player to know when it has occurred and then what to do to input 370 for a correct response 310.

On page 15, lines 18-24, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

What is important is that while the “existence” of a hidden bonus feature 200 (somewhere within the casino game) may be alluded to or otherwise generally made known,

the occurrence of the hidden bonus feature 200 during the casino game is not overtly displayed to the player. In this fashion, unknowledgeable players are not frustrated at knowing they're supposed to do something and failing. Knowledgeable players are still rewarded.

On page 15 beginning at line 25 and carrying over to line 4 on page 16, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

The hidden bonus feature 200 of the present invention is a special attraction to the players in that it occurs, perhaps suddenly as a graphic (or the combination of game symbols appear 92 suddenly appears) on the display 110 to the player. As such, it may surprise the player. But, there are no instructions on the casino game as to what the player should do when the hidden bonus feature 200 appears. It may well be that others watching the player may educate the player as to what to do (i.e., touch the parrot or "You have four watermelons, hurry and touch the last watermelon!"). This all adds to the surprise, excitement, and perhaps mysteriousness surrounding the hidden bonus feature 200 of the present invention.

On page 16, lines 5-30, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In Figure 4, an example of a hidden bonus feature 200 when displayed is shown. During play of the casino gaming machine 10 or the casino bonus game 100b, according to the method of Figure 3, a parrot 400 suddenly appears on screen 110 in an animated sequence such as flipping a gold coin 410. In this embodiment, this is a "cue" and the player has now been "cued." The player must correctly respond 310 in a predetermined time frame such as three seconds after the cue by touching 370 the displayed image 400. However, in one embodiment no instructions are given in the animated sequence 400 to the player to do this. In another embodiment a "cue message" such as "touch me" 420 is provided. Hence, if the player does not respond correctly 310 in the predetermined time frame in stage 310, then the hidden bonus feature 400 goes away and play 340 of the casino bonus game 100b or play of the gaming machine 10 resumes. If the player correctly responds in stage 310, then the award in stage 330 is given to the player. A cue ~~herein~~ is defined herein as a subtle

feature signaling action from the hidden bonus feature 200 to the player to act. The cue of the present invention is contained within the hidden bonus feature 200 only when it is displayed (or when ~~its~~ it occurs) and is not separately shown in the casino game. The ~~cue~~, cue to a new or uninitiated player would have no meaning, but to an initiated player who has discover the meaning it would. A “cue” and/or a “cue message” always appears as part of the hidden bonus feature 200. A cue is not needed for many of the hidden bonus features 200 discussed herein. For the example of the four watermelons, there is no cue as the appearance of the four watermelons is the hidden bonus feature 200.

On page 17, lines 1-18, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

As another preferred example, the graphic displayed is a variation of one the player has come to expect. As an example, the parrot 400 may be used as the “emcee” in a knowledge-based bonus game on an underlying slot machine. As the trivia question and answers are shown to the player in the bonus game, he may cheer on the player with phrases such as “Let’s get this one!” “This one’s a gimme!” “I love you!” and so forth. As a hidden bonus feature 200, he may, instead of one of the standard phrases, randomly flip a gold coin and ask, “Who wants some credits?” To the initiated observer, this is a subtle cue. To the uninitiated observer, this particular phrase, and its timing, looks much like any of the many other phrases and actions the parrot 400 may do. However, when the player touches 370 the parrot 400 on the display 110 within three seconds, a random award 330 is given to the player. If the player does nothing, or first touches 370 a response to the trivia answer, then no hidden award 330 is given and path 312 is entered for continuation of the casino game. The use of a cue adds excitement to the casino game since while the player is uninitiated, an observer may yell ~~our~~ out what to do upon seeing the cue.

On page 17, lines 19-28, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In another embodiment of the present invention, the correct action 370 to take during the occurrence of a hidden bonus feature 200 is touching (via touch screen) the object in question. This is a simple but effective means for the player to respond to the machine in a

fashion that acknowledges that the hidden bonus feature 200 has been discovered. It is an advantage of this approach that the player need not memorize complicated sequences of button pushes and so forth, which more resemble an exam than a game of entertainment. It is an advantage of this approach that the player who discovers the feature then has no further memorization to do.

On page 17 beginning at line 29 and carrying over to line 7 on page 18, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

Under another embodiment of the present invention, the hidden bonus feature 200 can be any type of cue to the player. The hidden bonus feature 200 can be an animated sequence, a video sequence, a graphic, a letter or number, a casino logo, a sound, etc. The present invention is not limited to the form, shape or type of hidden bonus feature 200 used. Furthermore, when the hidden bonus feature 200 is not to be displayed, an alternate feature can be displayed. For example, the parrot 400 can be displayed in an animated sequence simply flapping its wings without showing the gold coin 410.

On page 18, lines 8-22, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In one embodiment of the present invention, some mode of timing is utilized in conjunction with the hidden bonus feature 200. A clock, internal timer, etc., such as for three seconds can be ~~used~~ used. Alternatively, the player may have no time limit per se in step 310, except that if the hidden bonus feature 200 is not responded to as the first response, then it goes away. As an example of this alternative, consider a trivia-based bonus game with a hidden bonus feature 200. The hidden bonus feature 200 may be on-screen motion (e.g., a bird 400 flipping a gold coin 410), or perhaps a change in artwork that the player sees (e.g., an orange sun instead of a yellow sun). Provided the player responds 312 correctly, by first touching 370 the element that comprises the hidden bonus feature 200, before selecting an answer to the ~~trivia-based~~ trivia-based bonus game, the hidden bonus feature 200 is awarded 330. On the other hand, if the player selects and answers the trivia question, the hidden bonus feature 200 is not awarded.

On page 18 beginning at line 23 and carrying over to line 5 on page 19, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

The hidden bonus feature 200 of the present invention may, as discussed earlier, interrupt the play of the casino game, be part of the play of the casino game, or occur in parallel with the play of the casino game as discussed above with the parrot graphic 400. The present invention uses a hidden bonus feature 200 ~~occurs~~ occurring in a display 70, 110 of the casino game to the player. In one embodiment, the hidden bonus feature 200 is not disclosed to the player in the instructions for or on the casino game. Alternatively, the casino game may be denoted as having a hidden bonus feature 200 existing, but with no other information about the hidden bonus feature 200 disclosed to the player such as what it is, when it occurs, why it occurs, or how to respond. The hidden bonus feature 200 of the present invention is a bonus in that it delivers an award 330 in addition to what is normally expected by the player during play of the casino game.

On page 19, lines 6-18, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

3. Wide Area Progressive. The interrupt in the play of the casino game and the occurrence of the hidden bonus feature 200 can also be the result of a wide area progressive interrupt. For example, in one variation of the present invention, the hidden bonus feature 200 interrupts play of the casino gaming machines GM interconnected into a wide area progressive system 500 as shown in Figure 5. In such wide area progressive systems 500, a central controller 510 is used to control the wide area progressive system 500. The method of the present invention can be implemented into the central controller 510 for play of a casino gaming machine GM in a plurality of casino gaming machines GM all interconnected over a bus 520 in a wide area progressive system 500. As shown in Figure 1, a port 140 interfaces the microprocessor 20 to the bus 520.

On page 19 beginning at line 19 and carrying over to line 8 on page 20, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In operation and in reference to Figure 5, the player sitting at a gaming machine GM would not be aware of how to respond to the hidden bonus feature 200. No information on

how to respond to the hidden bonus feature 200 would be found at any one of the gaming machines GM. ~~The controller 510 responsive to,~~ For example, a random number generator would cause the controller 510 to provide at one of the gaming machines GM the hidden bonus feature 200. As previously discussed, the player sitting at that gaming machine GM would have the opportunity to correctly respond to the hidden bonus feature 200 and collect an additional award 330. If an incorrect response 310 occurs, the play of the gaming machine GM is conventional 340. It is to be expressly understood that there are a variety of wide area progressive system ~~configurations~~ 500 configurations and that such system 500 configurations can be adapted to include an island of gaming machines, gaming machines spread across a casino, gaming machines interconnected together amongst a variety of casinos or a progressive system 500 connected over a network or over the Internet. Again, the topological configuration of a wide area progressive system 500 does not affect the teachings of the hidden bonus feature 200 of the present invention.

On page 20, lines 9-22, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In Figure 6, 7, a variety of programs could be utilized to implement the hidden bonus feature 200 of the present invention. For example, in Figure 7, the display memory 130 could have a first program 700 which can be selectively implemented by the display processor 120 based upon an address 710. In this first program 700, a parrot ~~720~~ 400 as shown in Figure 4 is displayed. The value stored at 730 is \$50. Separate programs 710 and 720 could exist for different visual hidden bonus features 200 such as a rabbit showing \$100 or a piggy showing \$10. The present invention is vigorous in that the same program 700 could always be used showing, for example, a parrot 400 as shown in Figure 4 using the same value (i.e., 50 coins) or using different values with the same visual image. On the other hand, the different programs 700, 710, 720 could be randomly selected to provide a wide variety of hidden bonus features 200.

On page 20, lines 23-29, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

4. Internet. In another variation of the present invention, the casino gaming machine 10 is a player's own personal computer PC interconnected to a central computer 600 over the Internet 610. It is immaterial whether the casino game is being played in the software in the player's personal computer PC or whether the player's personal computer PC operates as an input/output device for the casino game being operated by software in the central computer 600.

On page 21, lines 1-11, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

In Figure 6, the computer 600 is located at a remote location and communicates 610a over the Internet 610 to a plurality of personal computers PC 1-PC j. The communication links 610a, 610b, 610c, and 610d are conventional and use of the Internet 610 to establish such communication links 610a-d is well known and not material to the present invention. In the same fashion, as discussed above for the wide area progressive 500, the computer 600 causes a hidden bonus feature 200 (such as bonus features 200p, 200q, and 200r shown on computers PC1, PC2, and PCj, respectively, in Figure 6) to occur on a personal computer PC while a player is playing a casino game. Again, if the player correctly responds 310 to this occurrence, the player receives an award 330 and, if the player incorrectly responds 310, the game continues.

On page 21, lines 12-29, replace the present paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

5. Summary of Method. In Figure 8, the method of the present invention is set forth as implemented in a casino game ~~such~~ (Figures 1 and 2); in a wide area progressive (Figure 5); or over the Internet (Figure 6). The casino game starts 800 such as, but not limited to, coin-in, sign-on, entering a bonus game based on a bonus condition, etc. As the casino game is played (or played to conclusion), a hidden bonus feature 200 may be provided 810. The step of providing 810 a hidden bonus feature 200 may occur randomly (Figure 3 from RNG 300, the appearance of a game symbol or combination of game symbols, etc.) or upon a predetermined event in the casino game (Figure 3 from event 302 such as a predetermined number of coin-ins, payout credits, etc.). When no hidden bonus feature 200 is provided,

then the casino game is conventionally finished 850. When the hidden bonus feature 200 is provided it is no longer hidden and the player responds 820 with an input 830. If the response 820 is correct, an award is delivered 840. If there is no input 830 or if the response 820 is not correct, then step 820 allows the casino game to be conventionally finished 850.